



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Fish & Wildlife News

Winter/Spring 2006

Looking for
a Legend

Wheelin'
Sportsmen

Living with
Grizzlies

The Galapagos of the North

*Alaska's Pribilof Islands are home
to a teeming world of wildlife.*



Inside this Issue...

Departments

News Briefs / 4

Faces in the Field / 11

Science & Technology / 22

From the Hill / 23

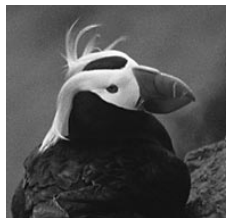
Fish Tales / 23

Transitions / 24

Honors / 26

In Memoriam / 27

Features



The Galapagos of the North / 12

Alaska's Pribilof Islands are home to a teeming world of wildlife.

By Karen Sullivan



Looking for a Legend / 15

The search is on for the ivory-billed woodpecker.

By Tom MacKenzie



Wheelin' Sportsmen / 18

At Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge, disabled hunters get their time in the blinds.

By Terry Villanueva and Terri Edwards



Living with Grizzlies / 20

Proposed delisting marks a new era for these misunderstood bears.

By Valerie Fellows

On the cover: *A pair of tufted puffins from the Pribilof Islands. (USFWS)*

From the Director

Returning to our Roots



In early March, Service leaders met at the National Conservation Training Center to participate in a workforce planning workshop titled, “Shaping Our

Future.” They took some important first steps in setting a course for the Service for the next three to five years and expressing our core values—the things that mean the most to us.

This workshop was part of a process of change that will be ongoing as we rise to the conservation challenges of the 21st century. But as we prepare to embrace change, I believe there will be one constant: science will remain the heart and soul of this agency.

I started out with the Service as a wetlands biologist. Twenty-seven years later, I still view the world through a scientific lens. Science doesn’t make decisions for us, but it lays the foundation for making good decisions. The cornerstones in that foundation are the *strength* of the science (considering factors such as certainty, completeness, and the rigor of review) and the *objectivity* of our analysis. Both are essential in supporting sound policy discussions.

I think it’s important to remember that the world doesn’t expect us to know all the answers. In science, sometimes the best answer is “I don’t know,” or “I’m not sure.” If we are to strengthen our reputation as a professional science organization, we need to be constantly vigilant that we are building the foundation to support solutions—not necessarily, or always, building the solutions themselves. And we need to compile and view scientific information objectively. As scientists, we search for truth, even when the truth doesn’t necessarily support our opinion or preferences; in fact, especially then.

To protect our scientific credibility, we also have an obligation to maintain a culture of thorough, in-Service scientific debate. Premature release of draft documents, scientific analysis or briefings can significantly undermine public confidence in our methods and findings, as well as our ability to have free and open internal debate on data interpretation and analysis. To ensure the integrity of this process, it’s imperative that all draft documents, and assessments remain inside the Service, except as is required to support collaboration with federal and state peers. This does not mean that we can’t have discussions with outside experts, such as universities and conservation partner organizations. Those discussions are essential in building what Deputy Interior Secretary Lynn Scarlett calls “shared knowledge.” But we don’t share decision-related documents until the Service has completed its internal discussion and consideration.

I realize that we work in a very difficult environment. We’re all faced with the challenge of trying to do the right thing under increased scrutiny, and at the same time, we have to adjust to new priorities and expectations. That’s reality. While we need to address those challenges, the thing that is most directly under our control is how we conduct ourselves, as individual professionals and as a professional organization.

I have directed the Service Science Committee to recommend guidelines with which we can evaluate the strength of scientific information. There are other measures we can take to make sure we’re setting and maintaining high scientific standards. One of those is to strengthen partnerships with science organizations and scientific professional societies. In this issue of *Fish & Wildlife News*, you’ll read about a survey conducted by the Service, The Wildlife Society, the American Fisheries Society, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and Cornell University

to assess the roles of professional societies in the Service and the USGS Biological Resources Discipline. Involvement in professional societies keeps us informed about new scientific directions and ideas, provides a way for Service scientists to share their ideas and knowledge with the larger scientific community, keeps us engaged with professional colleagues and raises the stature of our employees and our organization.

We all know the stereotype of scientists as unsociable folks who just want to be left alone to do science. But that’s not the stereotypical Service scientist. We value our professional relationships and collaboration with partners. We know it’s essential to our credibility and accomplishment of our mission. I plan to continue former director Steve Williams’ practice of holding bimonthly meetings with the USGS director and periodic meetings of our Directorate and the USGS leadership team to make sure our scientific priorities are aligned.

As we envision what we want to be in the future, we must not lose sight of the fundamental scientific principles and practices that have sustained us for decades. I appreciate everything you do to provide the best available information to support decision-making. I know you are working under very challenging circumstances, and I look forward to joining with you in continuing our tradition of scientific excellence.

News Briefs

Building for the Future

More than 75 Service leaders met in early March in a workforce planning workshop designed to determine what the agency should look like in the next three to five years and beyond.

During the three-day session held at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, the group of Assistant Regional Directors, Washington Office Division Chiefs and staff involved in current workforce planning efforts generated an extensive list of recommendations aimed at making the Service more efficient and effective.

The discussions were framed by a host of challenges facing the agency, including budget constraints, urbanization, changing demographics, loss of experience and leadership due to workforce turnover and natural forces such as last summer's Gulf Coast hurricanes.

Shedding program loyalties, participants identified core values and challenged the status quo by supporting the concept of "one Service" that combines and integrates resources and ideas rather than a fragmented network of programs. Most also agreed that available resources should be directed to on-the-ground conservation and resource management rather than administrative growth.

"We need to begin with the end in mind," said John Christian, Assistant Regional Director for Migratory Birds and State Programs in Region 3. "And that end is the resource."

The group's recommendations will serve as a cornerstone for ongoing workforce planning efforts and have bearing on present and future budget discussions.

"This [workforce planning process] is kind of like building a boat we will all share to take us where we need to be in the next several years," said Service Director Dale Hall, who remarked that the session exceeded his expectations. "What this first workshop did was to go into the forest, cut the trees, bring them back to the construction area and remove the bark. We now have the ability to look at the raw materials and go to work."



Bud Oliveira, Assistant Regional Director for Refuges in the Southeast Region, participates in a group discussion during the workforce planning workshop at NCTC. (USFWS/Ryan Hagerty)

The first day of the workshop resembled a college reunion, with Service leaders greeting old friends and catching up on news from other offices and the field. But the importance of the session quickly became apparent when the Director in his opening remarks challenged the group to come up with ways to transform the culture of the Service from "business as usual" to one that expects change and effectively manages for it. Hall urged them to confront the hard decisions of eliminating some programs and functions, suggesting that they identify the ones for which they would "fall on their sword."

"I would rather know the Fish and Wildlife Service as the experts in 15 things than not know us at all for 50," he said. "Our tough assignment is to identify those 15 or so things we want to be known for in the future. I have unquestionable faith in you and your ability to meet this challenge."

Deputy Interior Secretary Lynn Scarlett, International Association of State Fish and Wildlife Agencies Executive Vice

President John Baughman, National Wildlife Federation President and Chief Executive Officer Larry J. Schweiger, author Richard Louv and others informed workshop participants on a range of conservation issues ranging from global warming to Louv's contention that children in the digital age are increasingly becoming estranged from nature.

Quoting Yankee baseball legend Yogi Berra, who once remarked that "the future ain't what it used to be," Scarlett urged Service leadership to change with the times.

"We need to have the right people in the right places with the right tools and clear goals," she said. "The public demands a government that is more efficient, transparent and accountable.... The Fish and Wildlife Service is poised to meet those challenges."

Freed to explore ideas without having to consider the implications of cost and other realities, participants brainstormed ideas in several cross-programmatic groups. Suggestions included consolidating and combining programs; creating "service centers" that combine administrative functions; co-locating offices on government land; eliminating rent costs by locating offices on Service lands (one group aspired to have the Service paying no rent in 15 years); improving leadership development programs; creating a more interdisciplinary workforce with diverse skills; ensuring that consistent messages are communicated to the public; improving internal communications and information sharing; and incorporating more partners and stakeholders—including local governments, State and Federal agencies, and conservation groups—in collaborative approaches to resource conservation.

"We're on the verge of a new day," said Gerry Jackson, Assistant Regional Director for Fisheries in Region 3. "This cross-program meeting is one of the greatest things I've seen in 30 years working here. Our organization is ripe for change and we need to seize the opportunity."

In addition to specific recommendations to improve performance and meet the needs of a changing public, the group also sounded several general themes, including:

- Establishing more trust within and outside the Service.
- Embracing “landscape-level” conservation.
- Moving from “statutes to stature” (relying less on regulation and more on cooperative management and voluntary incentives).
- Encouraging the Directorate and leadership at all levels to commit to moving the Service’s workforce planning efforts forward.
- Involving the entire Service in the workforce planning process.

Hall said the information and recommendations from the workshop will be used “as much as possible” in helping the Directorate craft the 2008 budget proposal, though he cautioned that the Directorate would have little time to review the information before its budget discussions the first week of April.

The Directorate’s new Management Oversight Committee has been charged with reviewing the material and providing recommendations to the Directorate on ways to begin implementing some of the ideas from the workshop.

“The Directorate expects to continue efforts to involve you and get your input as we go through this year so decisions can be made that will have significant influence on the 2009 budget process,” he said.

Though participants were generally upbeat about the first steps of workforce planning, many, like David Patte, Assistant Regional Director for External Affairs in Region 1, were also realistic about the road ahead.

“This meeting was a start,” Patte said. “The next steps would be grouping the ideas, and then we need to form work team assignments to see what kinds of actions can be taken—short-term and long-term. A lot of follow-up is needed, and our Service leadership needs to make commitments to the next steps because they will be the most difficult and time-consuming.”

*David Eisenhower, Public Affairs,
Washington, D.C.*

Kempthorne Nominated for Interior Secretary Post

Idaho Gov. Dirk Kempthorne has been nominated to succeed Gale Norton as Secretary of the Interior. As of the *Fish & Wildlife News* press deadline in April, Kempthorne had yet to be confirmed by the U.S. Senate.

In nominating him for the position, President George W. Bush said Kempthorne has broad experience needed for managing the 388 parts of the National Park system, 545 wildlife refuges and more than 260 million acres of multiple-use lands located mainly in 12 western states.

Prior to serving as governor, Kempthorne served six years in the U.S. Senate, from 1993 to 1998.

Kempthorne said he appreciates and respects the President’s “genuine enthusiasm for this great land of ours in all of its grandeur and its essence.” He said he would be “a responsible steward of the land and the natural resources with which our nation has been blessed.”

Norton, 51, is the first woman to serve as the Secretary of the Interior. She was the 48th Interior Secretary and served longer than all but six of her predecessors.

In a letter to President Bush announcing her resignation in March, Secretary Norton thanked the President, “for inviting me to be part of your Administration for a meaningful and rewarding five years.”

“With your support and leadership, your team at Interior has accomplished great work in the face of hurricanes, record-setting wildfires and droughts, acrimonious litigation, and expanded post 9-11 security responsibilities,” the letter reads in part. “The Interior Department has conserved millions of acres of public and private lands and steered the nation toward cooperative conservation by working with landowners and local groups.”



*Former Interior Secretary Gale Norton and Governor Dirk Kempthorne.
(DOI/Tami A. Heilemann)*

A Lasting Legacy

Hundreds of people and organizations are voicing support for the National Fish Habitat Action Plan, which harnesses the energies, expertise and existing partnerships of State and Federal agencies and conservation organizations to improve aquatic habitat health. The Service is the lead Federal agency supporting this effort.

As of late February, the National Fish Habitat Initiative (NFHI) Partners Coalition included approximately 350 organizations and more than 800 individuals.

“The National Fish Habitat Action Plan is about striving for and fulfilling a commitment—a commitment to address current needs; a commitment to cultivate new partnerships; a commitment to identify new opportunities—all working toward a commitment to better protect, restore and enhance the nation’s fish and aquatic communities and to improve the quality of life for the American people,” said Mamie Parker, Assistant Director of Fisheries and Habitat Conservation.

Service Director H. Dale Hall has called NFHI “the greatest legacy we can leave for future generations.”

Legacy, continued on page 6

News Briefs

(Legacy)

The idea of using the North American Waterfowl Management Plan as a model for a similar program for fish and fish habitat long has been a glimmer in the eye of fisheries professionals keen to address underwater crises that have evaded both public attention and coordinated, national action. The need for this effort was recognized by the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council in 2002 in its report "A Partnership Agenda for Fisheries Conservation." Fisheries experts agreed something needed to be done soon to connect national priorities with on-the-ground action. Enter the Action Plan.

Support for NFHI is enthusiastic—and real. For example, the Bush Administration in February provided key support by requesting \$3 million for the program in the President's proposed FY 2007 budget—a \$2 million increase over the amount allocated in FY 2006. The funding, which appears in the Service's Fisheries Program request, would support partnership-driven fish habitat projects established under the Action Plan.

In addition, \$1.47 million already provided for fisheries project funding under the Multi-State Conservation Grant Program is now supplemented by \$1.37 million in grants approved for 2006. The most recent projects represent five fish restoration

efforts designed to support the action plan: Western Native Trout Initiative (\$565,095), Midwest Driftless Area Fish Habitat Restoration Project (\$192,500), Southeast Aquatic Habitat Plan (\$257,000), International Instream Flow Program Initiative (\$262,000), and a Fisheries Data Base Summit (\$95,700).

Partners also are joining forces to ensure the action plan hits the ground running with the public and key decision-makers. With the assistance of numerous partners, the plan will be presented to leaders of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies in March 2006 at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Columbus, Ohio. A celebration and roll-out event is planned in April 2006 in Washington, D.C., to help draw attention to the fisheries and aquatic resource community's consensus on the need to get started on the plan's implementation.

"The National Fish Habitat Initiative is a critical component for the future health of our aquatic resources," said Gus Rassam, executive director of the American Fisheries Society. "As fisheries management uses the ecosystem approach more and more and as the public becomes more aware of the dire state of our aquatic habitats, it is imperative that all efforts toward restoration and rehabilitation have a common platform."

Each program within the Service and every employee can contribute to the work of the action plan. For more information about how to get your programmatic area involved, please visit with your regional Fisheries Program office. For general information about the action plan, visit <www.fishhabitat.org>.

Laury Parramore, Partnerships Projects Officer, Arlington, Virginia

(Illustration: USFWS/Duane Raver)

The Road to Recovery

In Oregon's Willamette Valley, rare and listed species are headed toward recovery, thanks to robust conservation partnerships developed and nurtured by Fish and Wildlife Service employees.

During the past decade, staff at the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex have worked extensively to build relationships with communities in the valley. That investment has yielded more than 250 projects with private landowners, restoring several thousand acres of wetlands and wet and dry prairie and oak savannah habitats at a time the surrounding area is undergoing tremendous population growth and development. The result? Nelson's checkermallow, a threatened plant, could be recovered within five years.

The Oregon chub, an endangered endemic minnow, is now found in 33 locations—up from 10 less than a decade ago. And two species of native birds—the western meadowlark and the western bluebird—nested at Baskett Slough National Wildlife Refuge last year for the first time in recent memory.

How did the refuge complex staff do it?

"We hit the road, so to speak, and started going to watershed groups, conservation organizations, plant clubs, anybody who would listen to us," said Jim Houck, deputy project leader at the Willamette Valley complex who started the complex's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program. "We realized we weren't going to achieve our conservation goals by just working between the Blue Goose signs."





Meeting with landowners such as Richard Owens (left) of Corvallis, Oregon, is a big part of the wildlife conservation work done by Steve Smith, a private lands biologist with the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex. (USFWS)

The effort has paid off. Landowners have become the complex's best outreach leaders as they show off their restoration projects to neighbors and friends and enlist them in projects of their own. And other agencies and organizations have signed on: about 50 have been involved in either funding or labor during the past 10 years.

"We've gone from Jim (Houck) working part-time to having two full-time biologists and three other employees in the program," Refuge Project Leader Doug Spencer said.

A big boost came in January 2002 when Steve Smith joined the refuge complex as the private lands biologist. He had years of experience working for the state on habitat restoration in the Willamette Valley, which gave him an intimate knowledge of the landscape and a list of landowner contacts. He signed up 28 new landowners for projects in 2005 and expects another 30 to 40 in 2006.

"These partnerships are going to be the key to recovery," Smith said. "I don't know how else it would be possible."

In 2004, the refuge complex partnered with the Natural Resource Conservation Service to take the program to new heights. The Conservation Service had wetland restoration money through the Farm Bill. The refuge had staff and equipment. Together, they have grown the program into a \$2.5 million effort.

These days, the refuge staff doesn't spend a lot of time on outreach. Their landowner partners do it for them.

"It's an awesome program, I can't say enough good things about it," said Dale Bergey, who's working on his second restoration of wetlands and wet prairie after hearing about the program from a neighbor. "I've had guys stop by and say they noticed it and wondered how I made it happen. I tell them what we did, who I did it with and say, 'here's who you call.'"

"It's just very rewarding," he added. "You can leave your mark on something."

*Joan Jewett, External Affairs,
Portland, Oregon*

Preserving Gulf Coast Treasures

After the Gulf Coast was devastated by hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requested assistance from various Interior Department agencies for expertise on several fronts. One such request was for museum collections specialists—museum conservators in particular—to assist with museum collections affected by the storms.

Jeanne Harold, a museum conservator for Museum/Archives at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, responded to the call.

"As the only museum conservator in the Service, I volunteered for a one-month detail in New Orleans to help assess and salvage museum collections," Harold said. "My time at the FEMA Joint Field Office in Baton Rouge included many site visits into New Orleans and surrounding parishes to survey collections and determine how to salvage and stabilize damaged museum objects.

Harold, National Park Service teammate Blair Davenport and FEMA coordinator Alan Aiches visited nine different museums in New Orleans (the 7th and 9th wards) and in Slidell, Louisiana. Those included the University of New Orleans (UNO), Southern University of New Orleans (SUNO), Jackson Barracks, Beauregard-Keyes House, Slidell Museum, Slidell Cultural Center and the Black Arts National Diaspora Museum. The team surveyed materials and offered consultation on a range of items, such as Mardi Gras Indians costumes at the Back Street Museum, Chevron drilling core samples at UNO and African ethnographic artifacts at SUNO.

Harold said the level of destruction was "truly amazing."

"Most of these collections were subjected to three- to six-weeks of standing water, and then several months of extremely high humidity because of the lack of electricity

News Briefs

(Treasures)

to run cooling and ventilation systems,” she said. “In all instances, the water that flooded the collections was brackish, as well as contaminated with hazardous chemicals and bacterial waste products. The waters left behind thick deposits of sludge, and mold growth that boggles the imagination.”

Scientists have since determined that up to 50 types of mold that have not been around for 100 years have flourished in New Orleans since the floodwaters have receded.

“As a museum curator, the fear of losing one’s collection to a catastrophe is bad enough, but to be unable to visit the site and assess the damage for weeks or even months is beyond comprehension,” Harold said. “In addition, most of these curators lost their homes and many could lose their jobs.”

Harold said she was struck by the number of contractors, curators and FEMA employees who expressed their gratitude for the efforts of Service personnel. In all, FWS employees saved more than 4,500 stranded residents, a fact that Harold said has not gone unnoticed.

“This experience has left indelible images in my memory. One that will never leave me is the sight of spray painted markings on houses that documented rescue efforts with the rescue crews’ acronym, date, type of search (interior or exterior) and number of bodies found. I was especially moved when the crews additionally noted that they had rescued pets from the residence. Another impression is of the power of Mother Nature,” she said. “The only thing that might have saved New Orleans would have been the natural buffer of wetlands that has been receding for years with development and human encroachment. Perhaps this horrible event will give us a second chance, and we will truly learn from our mistakes.”

Joining Forces for Conservation

“Lagoon Quest,” “Snake River,” and “Where Natives Walked” may sound like the latest round of Hollywood movie releases, but they are actually a snapshot of the 255 projects funded last year by the ongoing, joint efforts of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and its primary federal agency partner the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Last year, the Service and the Foundation worked with 217 different partners to administer \$36.1 million allocated for on-the-ground conservation projects. Of that total, approximately \$7.3 million came from Service funds while the rest was matched by the Foundation and other partners.

“Our relationship with the Foundation is important, particularly with declining budgets. Their ability to secure matching dollars allows us to accomplish a greater diversity and breadth of conservation,” said Casey Stemler, Special Assistant to Service Director Dale Hall and liaison to the Foundation.

Established by Congress in 1984, the Foundation is a private, non-profit organization devoted to creating partnerships that strategically invest in voluntary conservation projects.

To date, the Foundation has supported more than 3,000 grants among almost 1,400 partners, leveraging more than \$136 million in Service funds into more than \$448 million for on-the-ground projects that benefit conservation in all 50 states.

This past year, selected projects funded a wide variety of conservation efforts in accordance with a Conservation Plan developed in 2003 by the Service, the Foundation and its partners. The Plan identifies four areas of focus for funded projects: Working Landscapes, Critical Species, Stewardship, and Evaluation and Innovation.

As an example, the Institute for Bird Populations received \$752,000, including a Service contribution of \$46,527, and equal

Sikes Act.

(Left to right) John Baughman, Executive Vice-President of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Alex Beehler, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Environment, Safety, and Occupational Health, U.S. Department of Defense and Dale Hall, Director of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sign a memorandum of understanding that will help manage natural resources on military installations under provisions of the Sikes Act. The Act was enacted in 1960 to promote the sustained use of natural resources on lands controlled by the Department of Defense. (DOI/Tami Heilemann)



contributions from the Bureau of Land Management of the Forest Service, to link vital population information systems together to better monitor population declines in migratory birds.

“This is a great example of multiple federal agencies and partners coming together to conserve [wild birds] in a better and more strategic manner,” Stemler said.

Funded projects often benefit local communities and people, in addition to wildlife. A grant of \$101,800 was allocated for “Building a Bridge to Conservation,” an innovative project that connects inner-city art students with the Refuge System by developing outreach tools together for refuges.

“The projects funded through our partnership with the Service provide vital contributions to the conservation of our Nation’s fish and wildlife,” said Jody Olson the Foundation’s liaison to the Service. “The Foundation’s investments in innovative, collaborative solutions to conservation challenges could not be achieved without the strong support of our federal agency partners.”

For more information on the Foundation, visit their web site at <www.nfwf.org>.

*Michael Gale, Public Affairs,
Washington, D.C.*

free-of-charge to a sister conservation agency that desperately needs them.”

Service Law Enforcement Officer John Starcher, of nearby Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, said the idea for the Federal-State transfer stemmed from his conversations with West Virginia DNR Conservation Officer Troy Weber. The two have been involved in cases ranging from narcotics investigations to illegal trapping of a golden eagle. Because they are stationed in a rural county, Starcher said, he and Weber have come to depend on each other for back-up, training and investigative assistance.

“During a firearms training day we were discussing the need for a patrol rifle by the West Virginia DNR,” Starcher said. “That is when we began the efforts of transferring the firearms.”

Weapons Transfer a Federal-State Success

In the first transfer of weapons between the Fish and Wildlife Service’s National Wildlife Refuge System and a state agency, 262 rifles were consigned to the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (DNR) on February 9 from a temporary arsenal at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown.

The surplus Ruger mini-14 rifles, gathered from Federal refuges throughout the United States, were themselves former U.S. Border Patrol property before they came to the Service. Their transfer now to West Virginia will permit its conservation agency to standardize its inventory of weapons among conservation officers throughout the state. A smaller number of the rifles are destined for conservation agencies in Pennsylvania, Arkansas, and South Carolina.

“This is part of a national effort to clean up our inventories in the field, collecting guns that aren’t used or that can be serviced and used by state agencies,” said David Nicely, zone law enforcement officer based at Pennsylvania’s Erie National Wildlife Refuge, one of three Service employees who supervised the transfer. The rifles remain Federal property, however, and must return to the General Service Administration whenever they become unserviceable and ultimately are slated for destruction. The

Fish and Wildlife Service has transferred weapons to other Interior Department agencies in the past, but not to a state.

“The rifles are part of a national weapons ‘turn in and reduction’ process that began in 2003,” Nicely said. “West Virginia has a great need for these weapons and plans on putting them to use immediately. It’s a ‘win-win’ for both agencies—the Service can reduce its numbers of surplus firearms, while at the same time transferring them

After a year of review and approvals of West Virginia’s acceptance of this first-of-its-kind transfer, the rifles, bearing tags from former refuges like “Alligator River” and “Cabeza Prieta,” were inventoried and sorted at NCTC and then distributed across the Mountain State to individual conservation districts that same day in early February.

*David Klinger, NCTC,
Shepherdstown, West Virginia*



FWS Refuge Law Enforcement Officer Brett Hartwig (left) of Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Sgt. Bill Persinger of the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources take part in the first weapons transfer between the Service’s National Wildlife Refuge System and a state agency. The surplus Ruger

mini-14 rifles, gathered from Federal refuges throughout the United States, were formerly U.S. Border Patrol property before they came to the Service. (USFWS/Todd Harless)

News Briefs

Survey to Gauge Involvement in Professional Societies

The Fish and Wildlife Service is collaborating with The Wildlife Society (TWS), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and Cornell University to assess the roles of professional societies in the Service and the USGS Biological Resources Discipline.

Approximately 3,600 Service biologists will be surveyed across Ecological Services, Fisheries and Habitat Conservation, Endangered Species, Refuges, Migratory Birds-State Programs, and International Affairs in all regions. The USGS portion of the survey will target approximately 800 biologists.

During March and April, approximately 36 pre-survey interviews are being conducted in three geographic regions to explore why biologists participate or do not participate in TWS and other professional societies. Service and USGS respondents are selected to reflect diversity in the types of factors that may influence involvement in professional societies: position, length of employment, program, and gender. Interview data will help refine the internet-based questionnaire and enhance interpretation of survey results.

The survey questionnaire, which is administered by Cornell University's Human Dimensions Research Unit, surveys scientists to assess:

- the values and functions of employee membership in professional societies, and the extent and nature of involvement (e.g., journal subscriptions, attendance at meetings, publications, positions on technical or executive committees);
- employee perceptions of TWS regarding publications, policies, the annual conference, the wildlife biologist certification program, and activities at chapter, section and national levels; and

■ real and perceived barriers within the Service and USGS to involvement in professional societies.

In early May, 2006, Service and USGS biologists will receive an email and a link to the questionnaire. Employees will have 30 days to respond. As the 30-day clock winds down, employees who have not responded will receive email reminders. Approximately 100 non-respondents from the Service and 50 non-respondents from the Survey will be interviewed, via phone, to help determine whether and how non-respondents differ from respondents.

"Membership and active participation in professional societies are extremely important for our employees and our organization. It keeps us current with new directions, ideas, and technology in our professional fields, and also gives us the opportunity to share our knowledge and innovations with the larger professional community," said Dan Ashe, Science Advisor to the Director. "Employee

engagement in professional societies also strengthens the credibility of the Service as a professional scientific organization."

Project results and recommendations will be published in journals specific to the fields of wildlife research and management, social science, and human dimensions. They will also be presented to the Service Director and Directorate for consideration and action. Funding for the survey is being provided by the U.S. Geological Survey. This effort is the result of an agreement between The Wildlife Society, Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Geological Survey to exchange scientific information, advance professionalism in the agencies, and elevate continuing education of wildlife biologists and managers.

For questions concerning this project, contact <eric_taylor@fws.org> or 301/897 9770.

Eric J. Taylor, USFWS Liaison to The Wildlife Society



Settlement Agreement. *Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station viewed from the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge in northwest Ohio. The refuge will receive \$1.35 million to fund improvement projects on the refuge as a result of a settlement agreement between the U.S. Department of Justice and First Energy Nuclear Operating Company (FENOC), owner/operator of the power station. Per terms of the agreement, FENOC admitted that the government can prove the company's employees knowingly made false statements to the NRC regarding the condition of equipment at the power station. The refuge will use \$800,000 to construct dikes and water control structures that will restore 170 acres of former farm land to a high-quality wetland. The wetland will provide habitat for waterfowl and other migratory birds including bald eagles. The remaining \$550,000 will fund improvement projects associated with the refuge's new Visitor Education Center: (USFWS)*

Andrew Weik

Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge, Maine

By Joshua Winchell

Andy Weik is a wildlife biologist for the Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge, located in Maine along the New Brunswick border. Weik recently joined the Service from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, where he worked on a range of wildlife issues, from endangered species to migratory and upland game bird management. His wife—also a wildlife biologist studying habitat selection of lynx and Newfoundland marten—and young son Nolan joined Weik in his recent move from the metropolis of Bangor to the wilds of the Moosehorn region.

Fish & Wildlife News recently caught up with Weik to get his take on becoming a Service employee, and how well he's been able to integrate his family with his new refuge family.



Andy Weik and son Nolan share the bounty of outdoor life at Maine's Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge. (USFWS/Andy Weik)

Is your work as a wildlife biologist for the USFWS any different than working as a Maine wildlife biologist?

AW: I went from an ideal job with a state agency to an ideal job with Moosehorn. It was a no-lose situation. But when I worked for the state, I didn't get to do as much on-the-ground habitat management as I would have liked, working with people to manage habitat. So that's a big thing that I picked up at Moosehorn that I really enjoy. In this job I am able to work outside the refuge with neighboring private landowners to help them manage their habitats and those types of partnerships. Those relationships are really important to me.

Do you spend time hunting/fishing/birdwatching at Moosehorn in your free time?

AW: There *is* no free time with a little toddler. This year has been tough as far as my fishing, hunting, trapping, birding, canoeing and hiking goes. When I'm not working I'm taking care of Nolan, so that's pretty much my schedule. One of the tough things about moving out here from the Bangor area is that babysitters aren't easy to come by, so it's been a bit harder to get out.

As a new parent, what do you think it takes instill an appreciation for the outdoors in a child?

AW: My son gets a bit of the outdoors everyday. Whether it's looking at something I've brought home from work, or going to the window to look at the birds at the feeder. Anything having to do with animals or the outdoors is a major part of his life—he takes it all in. He's been out with me banding ducks and geese. Anytime we go for a walk, it's going out to look for squirrels, or look for birds, or take him out to the refuge and look for geese and ducks and that sort of thing. Some of the first words he spoke were a lot of different species of wildlife, duck, goose, musk ox, deer. His favorite meals contain moose or wild turkey. He was saying "woodcock" by the time he was 14 months old.

A lot of kids—even those of Service employees—might not have easy access to the outdoor resources you are blessed with. What might more urban parents do to give their kids an appreciation of nature?

AW: No matter where you are, there's always wildlife. Kids get thrills about seeing a gull or a grey squirrel. Reading to your children is another way. There's a big wildlife theme to about 90 percent of the kids' books we read to him. He loves naming the fish and wildlife in the prints that decorate our walls, and the various decoys, bones, feathers, and antlers that biologists seem to accumulate. We set up an aquarium and he loves watching the fish.

Which people are better at cocktail parties, wildlife or fishery biologists?

AW: The fishery biologists, because the wildlife people don't know how to drink like fish.

Joshua Winchell is a public affairs specialist in Washington, D.C.

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The Galapagos of the North

Alaska's Pribilof Islands are home to a teeming world of wildlife.

By Karen Sullivan

There are some places you visit that are entirely forgettable, but others leave an impression that is indelible, permanent and impossible to forget. When my small plane touched down last July on windswept, foggy St. Paul Island in the Pribilofs, more than 300 miles from mainland Alaska in the Bering Sea, I knew this place would be one of the latter — but I could never have predicted how unforgettable the Pribilofs would be.

I was going aboard the M/V Tiglax, the 120-foot ship that travels 20,000 nautical miles every season as the research vessel to the far-flung islands of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. This cruise was part of the long-term Seabird Marine Mammal Oceanographic Coordinated Investigation or SMMOCI (pronounced “SMO-sigh”). The Pribilof Islands are an annual monitoring site for the refuge.

The objective was to characterize the nearshore marine environment for the seabirds from nesting colonies by surveying—via 50-mile line transects—from the southern side of St. George Island to the deep pelagic zone beyond the shelf break. In addition to surveys, we measured water temperature and salinity at specified points along these transects by lowering a device called a CTD (Conductivity, Temperature, Depth) into the water to a maximum of 200 meters.



The M/V Tiglax (TEKH-lah: Aleut word for eagle) and its crew work for the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge as its research and transportation support vessel. In a season, the Tiglax may sail to islands in Southeast Alaska, the far western end of the Aleutian Chain, and into the Bering Sea. SMMOCI and the Pribilof work is an example of an ecosystem approach to conservation with the partners from USGS, the Institute of Marine Sciences, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and several universities. (USFWS/Mike Boylan)



An Arctic Fox on St. George Island. (USFWS)

Zooplankton were sampled at the surface with neuston tows, and vertical “bongo” plankton nets were lowered periodically. The abundance of zooplankton and fish biomass was tracked with an echo sounder that provided a colorful graphic display in the ship’s wheelhouse. Whenever a large amount of biomass showed, we sampled with mid-water trawl nets. We also sampled the bottom fauna with a small bottom trawl or a long line. The diets of large bottom-dwelling fish are a key to understanding what is happening in the water column, so in addition to measuring size, the fish crew collected the stomachs of some of the fish pulled in from the long lines.

On the evening before the Tiglax arrived to pick us up, I went for a hike with another crew member, a fisheries graduate student. At an old abandoned cement pier we watched red-legged kittiwakes jostle for the best perches, while a harlequin duck and a least auklet looked on. Seventy-five percent of the world’s red-legged kittiwakes are found in the Pribilofs, primarily on St. George. As we walked the red dirt road along the sea cliffs, a foggy wind swept the long tundra grass into swirls, and a sound like a cow barn at milking time reached our ears. This was immediately followed by a pungent odor wafting from hundreds of thousands of northern fur seals on the beaches to windward. Peeking over a cliff of hardened pahoe-hoe lava, we were immediately spotted by a young bull, which began to roar like the Star Wars character Chewbacca. A blue phase Arctic fox perched in a grassy hollow and watched us curiously. This was turning into an amazing walk, but St. Paul Island had a bigger surprise in store for us.

As a huge dorsal fin sliced the water below the cliff, we watched the largest killer whale we'd ever seen swim toward the alongshore kelp line, leading a family unit of two females and a tiny juvenile. Suddenly the water roiled, and the male lunged at a large fur seal. We watched in awe as the seal came partway out of the water; its flipper describing a wide waving arc as its body was flung into the midst of the orca family. The fur seal tried to stay afloat, weakly rising every few seconds for air. But more attacks by the two females and the juvenile soon dragged it beneath the surface. The large male patrolled the kelp line perimeter; and most seals stayed inside it. Then the orca family glided in tight formation down the kelp line, their breaths clearly audible to us. Fur seals on the beach quietly watched the orcas pass, then went back to scratching and basking on fog-wet rocks. When we returned to the bunkhouse, I learned from several National Marine Fisheries Service biologists who'd also witnessed it that seeing orcas kill a seal is a rare occurrence.

Aboard the *Tiglax* the next day, the 24-hour work cycles began immediately. The bird crew worked days, and the fish crew worked mostly nights. The boat crew, all professional mariners, worked the full 24-hour cycle in shifts. Mid-water trawls using heavy gear, or long lines using a hundred large, baited hooks, were set by fish and boat crews. Deployment and retrieval required careful coordination between the aft deck and the wheelhouse. With the safety and seamanship exhibited by the *Tiglax*'s professional crew, everyone felt secure, even working in the challenging environment of the Bering Sea. Winds of 25 knots and seas to 8 feet made for lumpy going and a few queasy stomachs, but nobody missed a shift because of seasickness.

I helped with bird surveys, and a typical day went like this: two teams of three people alternate two-hour watches during daylight hours on transect, usually ending around 10:30 p.m. when daylight fades. Port and starboard observers are posted on the flying bridge and a third person records the data in real-time coordinates on a laptop, sitting in a cramped and hot room abaft the wheelhouse, dubbed "The Hole." Observers with binoculars and hand-held VHF radios report every bird and marine mammal they see on the water within a 150-meter radius of the boat, which travels at a steady 10 knots. Every 3 minutes observers switch from scanning the ocean to scanning the sky, calling in all flying birds and ensuring none are double-counted.

Mostly this occurs at a leisurely pace, a typical sequence sounding like this: Observer: "On the water, northern fulmars, three; ancient murrelets, two; parakeet auklets, five." The Recorder double-clicks the radio mic in acknowledgement. Then the Recorder announces, "Time to scan, please." This can get a bit tedious if there isn't much happening, or, in our case, when

fog closed in and observers could hardly see. To enliven the watch and keep the fog-soaked observers on their toes, USGS biologist John Piatt, who supervised the bird operations, said to me, "I want you to sing out the scan calls from The Hole."

Never being one to refuse a dare, I rose to the bait—I mean, challenge. Songs composed on the fly began to hit the ship's airwaves every three minutes, and people began to listen and laugh. Pretty soon, a competition developed.

(To the tune of "New York, New York"):

"Start scanning the birds; I'm hittin' the keys; We're SMMOCI in the Pribilofs,

And it's a breeze..."

(To the tune of "Candy Man"):

"Who can count the birdies? Flying on the scan?"

Galapagos, continued on page 14



Murres on sea cliffs in the Pribilof Islands. (USFWS)



Above: The author (left) and Service environmental contaminants biologist Deb Rudis aboard the Tiglax. Handheld radios and binoculars are used to call in data from the ship's flying bridge. Below: A tufted puffin. (USFWS)



Galapagos

Enter all the data in the fog and get a tan, the Scanners can, oh the Scanners can..."

Everyone got into it, and a new SMMOCI tradition of attempting to sing the data was established. As birding heated up, however, comedy closed down and observers and recorders concentrated on getting data. Our busiest transect was circumnavigating 9-mile-wide St. George Island at a distance of less than a mile offshore. Airwaves buzzed with rapid-fire observer calls as we cruised past birds by the thousands, while in the mist we could see and hear birds in the millions along the 400-foot cliffs. After a rapid-fire watch in which two hours went by like two minutes and we burned through four radio batteries, someone joked that the laptop's keyboard had finally caught fire. Seeing that many birds in one place left even the most glib among us speechless.

What a privilege it was to see such richness and abundance. It reminded me of the obligation we all have to ensure that unique and irreplaceable ecosystems like this remain that way.



A longline is used to sample large predatory fish. (USFWS)

Back at the start-point of this transect, we pulled in a long line set four hours previously. The usual Irish lords, sculpins, halibut, skates and cod were pulled in, but much larger than any previously caught. One halibut weighed more than 70 pounds, and a huge fat sculpin measuring more than 2.5 feet was the largest anyone had ever seen. We photographed it and quickly put it back in the water. As each hook was pulled nearer the surface, it was fun to guess what the emerging shape was. One shape kept changing, and finally emerged as a large, bright scarlet-orange octopus with tennis ball-sized eyes. It let go of the decapitated fish it had been feeding on and slipped back into the ocean, but not before we got a good look as it was pulled out of the water. It was about 5 feet long.

That evening the Tiglax dropped anchor in a slight indentation on the island called Garden Cove. We were, quite literally, anchored in the Bering Sea. The engineer shut down the diesel engines, and we could all hear for the first time the sounds of this place. I listened to high-pitched bird calls over the noise of the surf, but then I realized that there was no surf; this sound was all birds. Astonished, I closed my eyes and began to pick out the sopranos, altos, tenors, basses, and wing-beat percussionists in this magnificent choir.

One evening we were completely surrounded by more than two dozen fin whales. These 70-foot brown giants circled and fed and swam past us, one tilting its latte-colored jaw out of the water as it seemed to be taking a better look. Next morning, on the last transect in dense fog, two fin whales surfaced less than 20 meters from the boat, their enormous brown backs arcing up, over and down into the water, with fins marking the end of their glide. All they left were two whale-shaped patches of turbulence on the water for us to marvel at.

Back at the Regional Office but still walking on sea legs, I braced myself against the imaginary roll and toss of elevators, offices and chairs, much to my staff's amusement. The swaying reminded me of the wonderful wildness of the Bering Sea and its special places such as the Pribilof Islands. There is good reason for their nickname "The

Galapagos of the North." What a privilege it was to see such richness and abundance. It reminded me of the obligation we all have to ensure that unique and irreplaceable ecosystems like this remain that way.

Karen Sullivan is assistant regional director for External Affairs in Anchorage, Alaska

Looking for a Legend

The search is on for the ivory-billed woodpecker.

Story and photos by Tom MacKenzie

With the arrival of more than 100 volunteer searchers, the 2005–06 Ivory-billed Woodpecker Research Project is fully staffed and moving forward.



Illustration of the ivory-billed woodpecker. (George M. Sutton/Cornell Lab of Ornithology)

The current field season continues through April 2006. The search is being led by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, The Nature Conservancy, and Audubon Arkansas, with the support and cooperation of other members the Ivory-billed Woodpecker Recovery Team.

“This is an exciting opportunity to better document the existence and learn more about this magnificent bird,” said Sam D. Hamilton, Southeast Regional Director for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. “Finding birds is a critical part of the recovery process and we’re hoping for some exciting news.”

The ivory-billed woodpecker, long considered to be extinct by most ornithologists, is North America’s largest woodpecker. In February 2004, the bird was rediscovered on Bayou De View in the Cache River National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) only two miles northwest of the city of Brinkley, Arkansas. It was the first time the ivory-billed woodpecker had been seen in 60 years. In April 2005, the rediscovery was made public.

Since last November, 22 search team leaders, coordinators, supervisors, and field technicians have been searching for the bird in eastern Arkansas. Volunteers will be deployed in groups of 14 for two-week periods through the remainder of the field season. The goal is to find an ivory-bill roost hole or nest hole and get additional photo or video documentation of the bird or birds—all in the hope of learning more about the species to bring the ivory-bill back from near-extinction.

To highlight the actions of the recovery team and help keep the public informed of the progress, the team invited more than 25 media representatives from local, regional, national and international media in December. A series of orientation tours helped reporters understand the scope of this massive effort to find “a flying needle in a haystack,” referring to the ivory-billed woodpecker and the half million acres in the Cache River NWR, White River NWR and the other key lands in the area that need to be searched.

Legend, continued on page 16



Martin Blaney, Arkansas Game & Fish Commission, briefs reporters at Dagmar Wildlife Management Area birding trail during media tour December 13, 2005.

Legend



Caryn Rousseau (left) of the Associated Press talks with Cornell field biologist Nathan Nanfield during a media tour for the ivory-billed woodpecker.

“Since the ivory-bill’s rediscovery, The Nature Conservancy has acquired for protection some 18,500 acres of habitat and worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to add 1,440 acres to the Cache River National Wildlife Refuge, where the bird was first spotted,” said Scott Simon, director of The Nature Conservancy’s Arkansas chapter. “The more data gathered about the number and location of ivory bills living in Arkansas, the more we can do to protect this fragile habitat and make sure this incredible bird survives for generations to come. Because of the great cooperation of many agencies and organizations focusing on habitat conservation, we have a chance to recover the ivory bill.”

Searches in Arkansas are planned for White River NWR, Cache River NWR, Dagmar Wildlife Management Area (WMA), Black Swamp WMA, Wattensaw WMA, and Benson Creek Natural Area. Other teams are starting to organize scouting trips to follow-up on ivory-billed woodpecker sightings from across the southern United States in the former range of the bird. This may involve work in South Carolina, Florida, Louisiana and Texas, but will depend on a review of what is believed to be the best habitat, along with credible recent sightings.

“The restoration of the entire corridor of the Cache River is extremely important to the habitat of many wildlife species, not only the ivory-billed woodpecker,” said Arkansas Game and Fish Commission Director Scott Henderson.

“The volunteers are vital to the search effort ... These folks are field biologists and avid birders—all of them giving up their time to be part of this once-in-a-lifetime recovery project.”

Dr. John Fitzpatrick, director of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Searchers will use traditional tools, such as binoculars and digital cameras, as well as high-tech methods that include Autonomous Recording Units, sophisticated sound-analysis software, time-lapse video systems, and remote cameras. Human searchers will make their way through the bayous by canoe and on foot, looking for promising tree cavities. They will also be conducting transect searches with the aid of GPS units.

At other times they will be sitting quietly in blinds, observing. Scouts will be looking for suitable ivory-bill habitat, assisted by NASA satellite photos that will help them focus on promising areas more quickly.

“The volunteers are vital to the search effort,” says Dr. John Fitzpatrick, director of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. “Without them there’s no way we could scour such a large area for ivory-bills. These folks are field biologists and avid birders—all of them giving up their time to be part of this once-in-a-lifetime recovery project.”

Key to the recovery of the ivory-bill is preservation of habitat. Thanks to the efforts of local hunters and anglers, the ivory-bill and many other species have been able to survive in the depths of the Big Woods. More than 75 percent of the habitat at Cache River NWR was purchased with \$41 million in revenue generated from the sale of Duck Stamps. Hunters, birders and other lovers of the outdoors are encouraged to buy stamps to save habitat, which not only benefits the ivory-billed woodpecker, but wildlife everywhere. Duck Stamps sell for \$15 at the United States Postal Service 1-800 STAMP-24 (1-800-782-6724), and at most major sporting goods stores that sell hunting and fishing licenses.

Tom MacKenzie is chief of media services in Atlanta, Georgia



Refuge Manager Dennis Widner points out reforestation issues at Cache River National Wildlife Refuge during a media tour in December.

Cashing In on the Ivory Bill

By Ronald Rundberg

After reading about the rediscovery of the ivory-billed woodpecker, I decided to take a week's vacation last June to the Big Woods section of Arkansas. The town of Brinkley is located midway between Little Rock and Memphis on the Mississippi River. As an amateur birder and a volunteer at the Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge near Eagle Lake, Texas, the story of the near-extinct ivory-bill captivated my imagination.

I wanted to do some birding of my own in the Big Woods, but more than that, I wanted to find out how the citizens of Brinkley felt about the rediscovery of the ivory-bill in their area and how this has affected their lives.

Located in the heart of the Big Woods, Monroe County is a true sportsmen's paradise. Duck hunting and deer hunting are extremely popular during their respective seasons. Fishing on the Cache River and the White River farther south are popular year round. Now, with the rediscovery of the ivory-bill, birding should bring more revenue to the entire county. Fishing and hunting guides have a great opportunity to take birders by canoe or by kayak into the cypress-tupelo swamps, oxbow lakes and bottomland hardwood forests of the Big Woods—an area encompassing 500,000 acres.

The Big Woods ecosystem is ideal for the ivory bill, the much more common pileated woodpecker and other species of woodpeckers, waterfowl, herons, and other birds that frequent the area. Migrating ducks—as many as 350,000 of them, including mallards and wood ducks—fly through the area each autumn. As many as 10,000 Canada geese find their way to the Big Woods during the winter, and since 1982, bald eagles have been found nesting in the White River NWR.

Other wild animals inhabiting the Big Woods include black bears, white-tailed deer,

beavers, otters, alligators and snakes such as water moccasins. Few sportsmen or fishermen frequent the extreme edges of the waterways of the Big Woods—areas where the reclusive ivory bills may have their nests or roosting sites in the White River NWR.

The Cache River NWR area (where the Ivory-bill was spotted) was closed when I was there, as was the road to the Bayou De View. So I did most of my birding in the Dagmar Wildlife Management Area (WMA) just west of Brinkley. There were educational displays or kiosks in the Dagmar WMA about the Big Woods ecosystem, the ivory-bills and the general history of the area. Farther south, I stopped by the White River NWR visitors' center near St. Charles, Arkansas. I was greatly impressed with this \$2.6 million facility. It had a bookstore, an environmental education classroom and outstanding exhibits highlighting the Fish and Wildlife Service, bottomland hardwood forests, and other ecological facts about the region. I did some birding in the nearby forests. I saw several trees which were drilled with many holes that were obviously made by woodpeckers—more than likely, pileated woodpeckers.

Back in Brinkley, virtually every person I met seemed to be overjoyed with the news of the ivory-bill rediscovery. The Brinkley Chamber of Commerce is excited, too, particularly about the prospects of ecotourism revenue. For a relatively small city of 4,000, Brinkley has seven motels and some 16 restaurants, cafes,

and eating establishments. Gene DePriest, owner of Gene's Restaurant and Barbeque, told me his business had increased tenfold since the announcement of the ivory-bill rediscovery. He now is promoting Brinkley as the "Home of the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker," and the city has put up a large billboard on nearby Interstate 40 advertising this claim.

Restaurant and motel owners are eager to host birders from all around the world who will want to visit their city to view this rare bird and add it to their life lists. One motel has even changed its name to "the Ivory-Bill Inn" and has become an RV park to accommodate birders.

All over the Brinkley I saw businesses and homes displaying ivory-bill artwork, and ivory-bill T-shirts were being sold throughout the city. The Brinkley Convention Center has become a popular place for birding seminars and conventions. Clarendon—the Monroe County seat—has hosted a Big Woods Birding Festival each May since 2001. The attendance at last year's festival was about 3,000—twice what it was the year before.

It's amazing how a conservation success story and a legendary bird can transform an entire town.

Ronald Rundberg is a volunteer at the Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge in Texas.



The Ivory Bill Inn in Brinkley, Arkansas. (Photo: Ronald Rundberg)

Wheelin' Sportsmen

At Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge, disabled hunters get their time in the blinds.

By Terry Villanueva and Terri Edwards

On a crisp, sunny day last December, the calls of Canada geese resonated along the shores of the Delaware Bay. A dozen men in wheelchairs, many of them veterans, gathered before dawn, eager to participate in a goose hunt on the Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge. Refuge personnel, professional waterfowl guides and experienced hunters, and other volunteers assisted the hunters, many of whom had never hunted waterfowl or were returning to the sport after sustaining spinal cord injuries.



Scott Ward (left) and Rick Vanvorst enjoy a break during the Wheelin' Sportsmen hunt at Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge. (Shannon Nardi/Dancin Dog Productions)

Since its inception in 2003, the “Wheelin’ Sportsmen” program, a partnership between the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Wild Turkey Federation, has helped people with disabilities enjoy the outdoors.

“When I was injured 31 years ago I sold all my outdoor equipment. I didn’t believe that I would ever hunt or fish again, but my friends didn’t let me give up,” said Wayne Carter, executive director of the Paralyzed Veterans of America’s Colonial Chapter. “The Bombay Hook goose hunt provides an opportunity for newly injured men and women to participate in an activity that they may not have considered possible from a wheelchair. Each year, I see disabled people become more confident as they realize that they’re capable of more than they thought they were, and that the outdoors is more accessible than it seemed.”

As the sun rose, the hunters settled into six temporary blinds amid decoys, clover and winter wheat fields. From this vantage point they could watch the thousands of geese that visit the refuge during the winter months. Despite the bright sunshine—an unfavorable condition for waterfowl hunting—four participants bagged a goose.

“The time in the blinds is more than a great day in the outdoors, watching wildlife, calling birds and hunting geese,” said Refuge Manager Terry Villanueva. “It is an experience that forms friendships and lifelong memories. The good will and enthusiasm I experience during this event each December has come to represent the spirit of the holidays for me.”

The youngest participant in the event, 13-year-old Patrick Mish, is confined to a wheelchair because of cerebral palsy. Mish said he woke up the day of the hunt barely able to contain his enthusiasm. When his father, Jim, asked him if he would still have fun if he didn't get a bird, Patrick responded with a resounding "Yes!"

Villanueva said she looks forward to next year's hunt, and hopes that the hunters will use the accessible blind during open goose hunting seasons on the refuge. She hopes the Wheelin' Sportsmen program will be expanded to other national wildlife refuges, and encourages any one interested in hosting a similar event to contact her for more information.

A steering committee with representatives from the refuge, National Wild Turkey Federation, and event volunteers planned this year's hunt. Sponsors included Altria, Anderson Homes, Horty and Horty, P.A., Kershaw Construction, Wilmington Trust, and Wing Master Farms. Partners include the National Wild Turkey Federation, Avery Outdoors, Colonial Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America, Dager's Waterfowling, Tim Ground's Game Calls, the Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife, William Manning and Safari Club International.

The sponsors and partners provided funding for wheelchair accessible field blinds, ammunition, equipment, supplies, and food, as well as donations of decoys and goose calls. The Friends of Bombay Hook received and managed the donated funds.

Terri Edwards is a public affairs specialist in Hadley, Massachusetts. Terry Villanueva is refuge manager at Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge in Delaware. Terry can be reached at 302/653 9345.

Show Time

An episode of "Waterdog," Outdoor Life Network's popular waterfowl hunting program, was filmed in conjunction with the Wheelin' Sportsmen event at Bombay Hook. Show host, Justin Tackett, interviewed hunters, refuge staff and volunteers, and the film crew spent time in the blinds during the hunt. Matt Hogan, Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks (at that time Deputy Director for the Service), spent the morning in the field with Tackett and his dog, Yella. Hogan demonstrated his skill calling in geese, and Yella made a couple of great retrieves. This episode on hunting and other recreational opportunities at Bombay Hook and other national wildlife refuges will air this fall. <www.waterdogtv.com>

Matt Hogan (left), Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, celebrates a successful hunt with "Waterdog" host Justin Tackett. (Shannon Nardi/ Dancin Dog Productions)



Encouraging Words. Service Director Dale Hall speaks to employees in the Atlanta, Georgia Regional Office. In January, Hall returned to the Southeast Region, where he served as Deputy Regional Director from 1997 until 2001. During the discussion he talked about budget issues, future challenges and opportunities,

and praised the work of Service employees during the 2005 hurricane season. "The Fish and Wildlife Service led, followed or got out of the way," Hall said. "When it was time to rescue people with boats, we led. When it was time to assist other people, we cleared debris, opened roads and made parking lots for hospitals. When it was time to get out of the way, we washed clothes and fed people and gave them a place to rest and have a shower."

Living with Grizzlies

Proposed delisting marks a new era for these misunderstood bears.

By Valerie Fellows

Native Americans called them “humans without fire” because of the way they stood on their hind legs and walked upright. In fact, some Native American cultures consider them the first humans, ancestors of all tribes. Lewis and Clark boasted of their triumphs hunting them, calling them the most ferocious beasts to traverse the western United States. And Aldo Leopold declared society’s need to pave the West in the name of modern progress as thoughtless and shortsighted, ignorant as it was of how we might need “them” someday as much as we do roads and buildings.



A grizzly forages for food in Yellowstone National Park. (USFWS)

The grizzly bear is a creature of folklore and legends, revered as a symbol of power, freedom and invincibility. Grizzlies became emblematic of the untamed Wild West, to be explored and conquered by European settlers. The perception that grizzlies were man-eating monsters threatening human existence made hunting them a priority for pioneers and an attraction to adventurers.

It took more than three decades of hard work to reverse the decline in grizzly bears in the Yellowstone area brought on by these misguided perceptions. On November 15, 2005, the Service proposed to delist the Yellowstone population of grizzly bears from the list of threatened and endangered species, heralding 30 years of robust population growth, intensive scientific research, State and Federal management efforts, and widespread public support for recovery. It is a success story that shows how far public understanding of grizzlies has come.

Historically, more than 50,000 grizzlies roamed much of North America, from the mid-plains westward to California and Mexico and northward to Alaska. By the early 1900s, settlers had hunted the grizzly almost to the point of extinction, leaving only 1,000 bears left in the lower 48.

There are five ecosystems where grizzlies can be found today in the lower 48: the Northern Continental Divide; in and around Yellowstone National Park; the Selkirk Mountains in northern Idaho and northeast Washington; the Cabinet-Yaak area in northern Idaho; and western Montana and the North Cascade mountain range.

Because of their dramatic population decline and uncertain future, the grizzly was listed as a threatened species in 1975 under the Endangered Species Act. When grizzly bear recovery coordinator Chris Servheen first started working with the Yellowstone grizzly population, there were fewer than 30 adult female bears and denial over the bear’s plight was widespread.

“In the beginning, there was strong resistance from state agencies to consider grizzlies as a threatened species and to get the Feds involved in management decisions,” said Servheen, who has spent 25 years working toward the recovery of the grizzly. “In many places, I couldn’t even get in the door. I knew that in order for change to happen, I had to get high-level decision makers involved in the process.”

So Servheen helped establish the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee, composed of 11 federal and state agencies dedicated to implementing the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan by coordinating education, research and management activities to recover the grizzly bear. “Listing a species under the Endangered Species Act is not enough to recover it,” Servheen said. “We needed to dedicate the staff and resources to implement the tasks and actions identified in the recovery plan.”

When the Assistant Secretaries for the U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Interior signed the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee bear charter in 1983 along with the governors of Wyoming, Montana, Idaho and Washington, they agreed that cooperation and participation among federal and state agencies was in the best interest of the grizzly. The goal of the committee is to engage top-level decision makers at federal and state agencies in coordinating research, policy, management and planning activities to facilitate the recovery of the grizzly.

The committee’s education campaign was specifically targeted to people who lived and worked in bear country. The campaign stated that properly disposing of trash in bear resistant containers, keeping electric fences around gardens and livestock, and keeping pets and pet food inside at night were important for residents to remove bear “attractants.”

Fact sheets, hunter safety classes and other educational tools were created to teach hunters and outdoor enthusiasts to recognize the signs of a grizzly, how to hunt elk and black bears safely in grizzly country, prevent surprise encounters with grizzlies and protective measures to take if a bear encounter is unavoidable.



Bear hunter on Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge, May 1957. Because of its dramatic population decline, the grizzly was listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act in 1975. (USFWS)

At Yellowstone National Park, people were frequently encountering grizzlies because of improper camping and sanitation techniques. Teaching visitors to properly dispose of trash and food to keep a clean campsite helped minimize the number of conflicts with bears.

“Then, the population trajectory of bears changed,” Servheen said. “Yellowstone grizzlies are now increasing at a rate of 4 percent to 7 percent annually. In fact, they are growing so much that they are moving into historical areas that haven’t been documented for more than 60 years. Now that bears are pushing out into the peripheral areas of Yellowstone, they are moving into some suburban areas. That means we have to shift our education efforts to people who are not used to living in bear country and change their perception about bears.”

Today, there are roughly 600 bears in or around Yellowstone National Park, an extraordinary recovery from the original population of about 200. Bears have increased so prolifically in both population size and distribution that they exceeded the



Today there are roughly 600 bears in or around Yellowstone National Park, an extraordinary recovery from the original population of about 200. (USFWS)

goals outlined in the recovery plan. Last November, the Service proposed that the grizzly be removed from the list of threatened and endangered species.

Servheen has witnessed not only a change in bear numbers and habitat, but also a change of public attitudes. He recognizes that there will always be some level of conflict between humans and grizzlies, but he is determined to work with all the partners involved to build support and educate the public about living with grizzlies.

He also understands the frustrations Service biologists face in their efforts to conserve endangered species with limited staff and funding.

“The time that species are under the protection of the Endangered Species Act is a function of the resources we invest in recovering them,” Servheen said. “In many cases, we have the biological tools we need to fix their problems, but we don’t necessarily have the funds. But I don’t get discouraged; the biggest reward for me is watching the bears rebound in some places. That shows me that our recovery work does make a real difference. Such success keeps me motivated to continue to work hard to recover the other grizzly populations.”

Valerie Fellows is a public affairs specialist in Washington, D.C.

Conservation at the Speed of Light

Wildlife biologists use Doppler radar to help manage migratory birds.

By Craig Springer

In your mind, it's always November. The sky is a variegated gray. Its five shades are a moving misty pale, smudged dark and sooty. The sun struggles to show itself on the horizon through the mass of clouds. In the dim light you can see a mass of birds moving over the treetops, almost level, going left to right over the marsh.

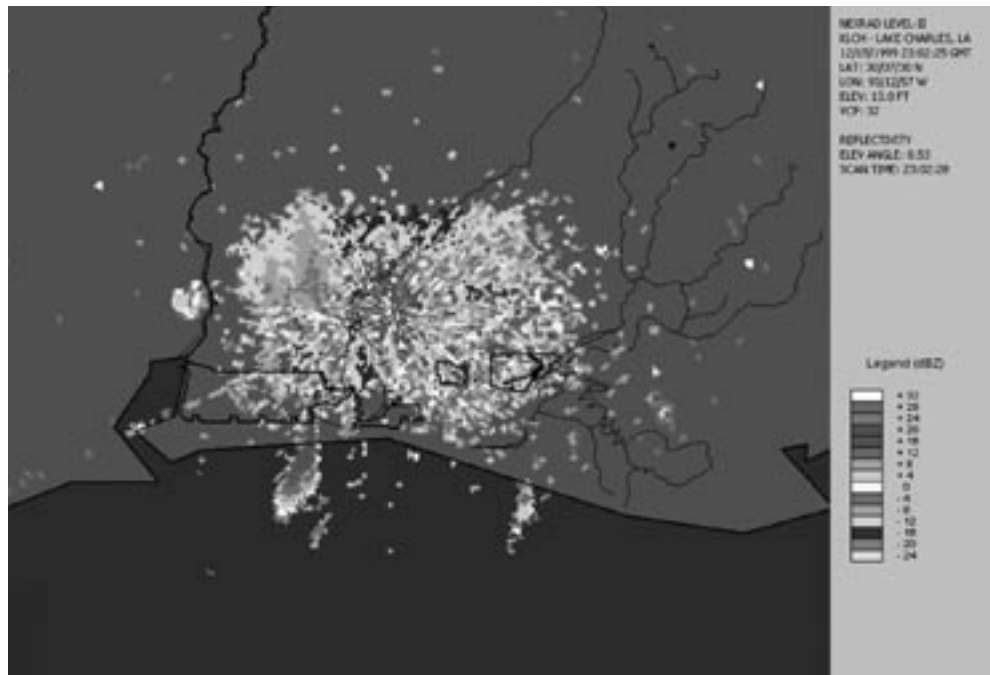
It's a scene you hope plays out this coming waterfowl season. How the birds behave is somewhat predictable—they get restless to break their fast and get to the fields to feed. When they move and where they go is becoming clearer to science.

The next generation of wildlife biologists is using a tool to help manage waterfowl, and migratory birds in general. It's the same tool you might rely on hoping to see tomorrow's sky will be dark, blustery and gray. It's NEXRAD Doppler radar.

NEXRAD stands for “next generation radar,” new and improved radar far more refined and sensitive than the original radar put into common use almost 60 years ago.

Its sensitivity to skyward objects makes it useful to biologists and land managers. The same radar that produces imagery for your weather forecast, or helps direct jet airliner traffic, also picks up bird traffic. In fact, NEXRAD is so sensitive, it can even detect grains of pollen wafting in the wind.

Here's how it works. NEXRAD sends microwaves into the sky. The waves strike an object like rain drops, a plane, or duck.



NEXRAD picks up an evening flight of wintering waterfowl at Lacassine National Wildlife Refuge, near the Gulf of Mexico in Louisiana. (USGS)

Most of the microwaves scatter, but some of the signal bounces back to the radar. It's done very rapidly, about 1,300 microwave pulses per second. As objects in the sky move, the signal changes over time, shown as movement on a NEXRAD screen. The technology also illustrates by color, the density of a flock of birds (or moisture content in the air), and which way they are traveling, and how fast they fly.

It's a coarse tool for biologists. They can't yet tell what species of birds are identified by NEXRAD imagery, but the sizes of birds do create different signals. The speed at which they fly also creates a different signal. Biologists can follow the nocturnal migrations. At any time of day, at least when birds are in the air, biologists can get an instantaneous broad-scale look at what birds are doing.

It has proven to be beneficial in land management. NEXRAD imagery reveals the linkage of the lands that surround wildlife refuges. It lets biologists see where waterfowl roost, and where they take flight to feed, and where they light. It's been extremely useful in that regard for land acquisition to conserve important habitat.

San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge on the Texas coast used NEXRAD to locate an important tract of bottomland hardwoods that 249 species of birds needed. They “fall out” of the sky and find respite in these Texas bottomland woods following a grueling 400-mile non-stop trek across the Gulf of Mexico. These birds refuel on the refuge, then fan out to the eastern two-thirds of the US and add color and music to backyards, wetlands, and woodlots from Maine to Montana.

NEXRAD offers utility in conservation by identifying the corridor that birds migrate. That gives land managers a tool in finding good places to locate communications towers and wind-powered generators.

This waterfowl season, as your experiences add to the imagery pooled in your mind, know too, the birds are also probably creating radar imagery—and data that scientists can put to good use for conservation.

Craig Springer is a fishery biologist in Albuquerque, New Mexico

By Matt Huggler

The Division of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (CLA) in External Affairs serves as the Service's main contact with congressional offices and is responsible for coordinating the Service's legislative agenda and congressional relations program. CLA also coordinates congressional and legislative activities with congressional liaisons headquartered in the Service's regional offices.

During 2005, Congress passed a number of bills benefiting the Service. These included:

- The Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act of 2005 (SAFETEA), which reauthorized federal transportation programs, reauthorized the Clean Vessel Act, Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act of 1950, and expanded Service authority for visitor interpretive enhancements. In addition, the bill appropriated nearly \$29 million per year for the refuge roads program that funds road construction and maintenance for public roads in the National Wildlife Refuge System.
- The Junior Duck Stamp Reauthorization Amendments Act of 2005, which reauthorized the Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design program through 2010 and increased the amount that is authorized to be appropriated for administrative expenses of the program.
- A bill to amend the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act to extend the date after which surplus funds in the wildlife restoration fund become available for apportionment to states.
- Legislation to correct a boundary issue at Cibola National Wildlife Refuge in western Arizona

■ Legislation appropriating \$10 million to the Department of Energy to purchase outstanding mineral rights at Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge in Colorado

In addition, during the year a number of important bills were introduced and moved closer to becoming federal law. When Congress returns for its second session in 2006, CLA will begin tracking these bills and helping to further the Service's legislative agenda. Among the many bills that may move in 2006:

- Reauthorization and amendment of the Endangered Species Act
- Passage of the U.S.-Russia Polar Bear treaty
- Legislation codifying the Partners for Fish and Wildlife program and increasing its authorization level to \$75 million
- Reauthorization of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act
- New authority for an electronic duck stamp, which would provide hunters with the ability to purchase duck stamps online
- Reauthorization of the Great Apes Conservation Act
- Reauthorization of the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act, which authorizes the Service to establish fishery resource offices to assist the States, Great Lakes Commission, Indian Tribes, and other parties in conservation of the fish, wildlife and habitat of the Great Lakes Basin.

Service employees are encouraged to contact their regional congressional and legislative liaisons or the Washington congressional and legislative affairs office with questions or for information.

Matt Huggler is legislative specialist in Washington, D.C.

Unraveling the Mystery of the Edmund Fitzgerald

In the underwater search for the subject of the 1976 pop tune of the same name—the Great Lakes ore boat *Edmund Fitzgerald*—the Fish and Wildlife Service played a minor, though memorable role, 14 years after the mammoth ship plunged to the bottom of Lake Superior.

As all who remember the haunting song by Canadian balladeer Gordon Lightfoot can recall, the *Fitzgerald* and its crew of 29 perished on November 10, 1975, near Whitefish Point, Michigan, while en route to Ohio, loaded with 26,000 tons of taconite in the midst of one of the worst November gales to hit the Great Lakes.

By 1989, the wreck located but its loss still unexplained, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service research vessel *Grayling*, a 75-foot steel fisheries boat homeported in Cheboygan, Michigan, served as the floating platform for a Michigan Sea Grant investigation. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the National Geographic Society, among others agencies, participated in the dive.

“Television and newspaper reporters flocked to the scene, eager for new information on the Great Lakes’ most famous shipwreck,” author Michael Schumacher relates in his 2005 book, *Mighty Fitz—The Sinking of the Edmund Fitzgerald*. “The suspense aboard the *Grayling* heightened as the ROV (remote-operated vehicle, an underwater robot) moved about the pilothouse, edging up to the smashed-out windows and peering inside. The pilothouse structure had been extensively damaged, and items inside had shifted and scattered when the *Fitz* plowed into the lake floor. Visibility in the water was excellent, and the images sent back to the *Grayling* revealed a grotesquely damaged ship virtually unchanged since the time of its sinking.”

Schumacher credits the expedition with producing “five hours of the best footage

Transitions

Who's coming and going

(Mystery)

yet of the wreckage,” yet inconclusive results in pinpointing the cause of the catastrophe. “The footage added more frustration to those seeking answers about the ship’s demise.”

The *Grayling* continues its service as a Great Lakes research vessel, now for the U.S. Geological Service’s Great Lakes Science Center (formerly managed by the Fish and Wildlife Service) in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

This is the first in a series of short features about little-known aspects of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by David Klinger of the National Conservation Training Center, Shepherdstown, West Virginia.

Tips for Photo Submissions

Because many images submitted to *Fish & Wildlife News* are in digital format, here are a few guidelines that can help you take better photos. A high-quality digital camera (preferably 4 megapixels or higher) can produce a print-quality photo as long as you use the highest resolution and largest dimension settings.

Settings will differ depending on the camera, but you should be able to easily select the right ones (high resolution is sometimes labeled as “superfine”). If you are not sure whether your digital camera can produce high-resolution images, please use a conventional camera with slide or print film. We will return your photos as soon as possible.

Thanks for spreading the word to your staff and for helping us maintain quality FWS publications.

Service Announces Management Changes

The Service in January announced several changes in assignment for members of its Senior Executive Service team.

“The Fish and Wildlife Service is fortunate to have a cadre of senior managers who are dedicated to our conservation mission and who have served in a variety of positions throughout the agency,” said Service Director H. Dale Hall. “All of these managers have served with great distinction, and I am grateful to have their assistance as we move forward with the Service’s important work on behalf of fish and wildlife conservation.”

The new assignments are as follows:

Mitch King, formerly Assistant Director for Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration, has been named as the permanent Regional Director for the Mountain Prairie Region in Denver, Colorado. The Mountain Prairie Region includes North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, and Utah. King replaces former Regional Director Ralph O. Morgenweck who accepted a new assignment with the Service as a senior science advisor in December 2005.

Rowan Gould, Regional Director in Alaska, will move to Washington, D.C., to fill the position of Assistant Director for Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration.

Thomas O. Melius, Assistant Director for External Affairs, will become the Alaska Regional Director in Anchorage, Alaska.

Elizabeth Stevens, Deputy Assistant Director for Endangered Species, succeeds Melius as Assistant Director for External Affairs in Washington, D.C.

Slack named Deputy Regional Director in Mountain-Prairie Region

Jay Slack has been named Deputy Regional Director of the Mountain-Prairie Region. Slack has been with the Service for 14 years. He comes to the Mountain-Prairie Region after serving eight years as the Field Supervisor of the South Florida Ecological Service Field Office in Vero Beach, Florida, where he was in charge of wildlife management activities involving endangered species, habitat conservation, private lands, environmental contaminants, and fisheries.

Prior to his time in Florida, Slack worked in Washington, D.C. as Chief of the Endangered Species Listing Program and as the national coordinator for endangered species section 7 consultation. He joined the Service as a herpetologist in the Phoenix, Arizona, Ecological Services Office. Prior to his Service experience, Slack coordinated a fisheries research program. He earned a bachelors degree in botany in 1986 and a masters degree in ecology in 1988 from Illinois State University, where he also completed post-graduate work in vertebrate ecology.

White Retires After 31 Years with Service

Wayne White, who led the largest U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service field office in the nation for the past 17 years, retired Feb. 3 after a 31-year career with the Service. The Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office implements the Endangered Species Act and other resource-management initiatives throughout Central California including the Central Valley, the west slope of the Sierra Nevada and the Bay Area—one of the fastest growing and most ecologically diverse areas in the nation. White’s successor has not been named.

Besides leading the effort to conserve and recover more than 140 threatened or endangered species, the Sacramento Office plays a pivotal role in California water issues, pollution prevention and cleanup, monitoring of environmental contaminants,

and restoration and protection of wildlife habitat. Under White's leadership, the Sacramento office pioneered efforts to develop new cooperative conservation strategies. White's accomplishments include helping craft the CalFed Bay-Delta agreement, developing economically viable conservation banks that allow the private sector to offset the adverse growth impacts on species, fostering Safe Harbor Agreements for private landowners, developing legal safeguards for ranchers who protect endangered species, and fostering local Habitat Conservation Plans to better protect species in rapidly growing areas.

Out & About Newsletter Ceases Publication

Out & About, the outreach newsletter of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Pacific region, ceased publication in early January because of rising costs and declining budgets.

The newsletter was founded in Portland, Oregon in 1992, when Service employees expressed their desire for a way of communicating with fellow biologists their "best practices" in effective outreach.

Out was born at that regional conference and raised in the six-state Pacific region starting two years later. Its influence, however, extended throughout the United States. Regarded as something of a pioneer in the field of outreach, it showcased examples of the best techniques in communications, partnership-building, and developing relationships by field employees themselves.



two about what works and what doesn't in communications."

"In 10 years, hundreds of articles and resources have been featured with a focus on outreach, reminding us how far we have come in communicating, and how important it is to use effective outreach to engender

"It was a catalyst for change and a vehicle by which our best performers in the outreach arena could share their accomplishments," said Jeanne Clark, the newsletter's editor. "Along the way, *Out* taught folks a thing or

passion for the fish, wildlife, and habitat we are working to conserve," said Nisqually Refuge's Sheila McCartan, one of the newsletter's founders, when the publication marked its first decade.

In tribute to *Out*'s record of service to the agency, David Allen and Steve Thompson, Pacific region director and manager of California/Nevada operations, respectively, commented, "We as an agency have recognized the importance of outreach efforts and acknowledge effective measures for outreach must continue to evolve if our vital conservation work is to succeed."

Though there has been some talk of a successor to *Out & About*, no firm plans have been announced.

Young

Conservationists.

Students from TC Martin Elementary school in Charles County, Maryland, participate in a two-day planting of native trees, shrubs and herbaceous wetland plants, creating a half-acre wetland. The Chesapeake Bay Field Office Schoolyard Habitat Program helps teachers and students create wildlife habitat on school grounds.



Many schools throughout Maryland's 23 counties have unused green space that can be restored to viable habitat through student action and outside partnerships. Through a partnership with CBFO, the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), TC Martin Elementary school built the wetland on their campus with no cost to the school. The project was designed to filter stormwater runoff from the school's parking lot and to provide a water source for local wildlife. The Schoolyard Habitat Program planned, designed, and completed 16 other projects at schools in five Maryland counties, teaching nearly 700 students about how their local watershed is connected to the Chesapeake Bay watershed and how their wetland project helps the bay. The wetland will continue to serve as an outdoor learning laboratory for students now and in the future as the project continues to grow.

Honors

Russell Receives Gottschalk Partnership Award

For his work on the historic Penobscot River Restoration Agreement, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service selected **Gordon Russell** of Holden, Maine, as the 2005 recipient of the Northeast Region's John S. Gottschalk Partnership Award. Russell is the project leader for the Service's field office in Old Town, Maine.

The agreement is one of the largest and most innovative river restoration projects in the nation's history and may be the single most important action to recover wild, endangered Atlantic salmon in the United States, according to the Service's Mike Thabault, assistant regional director for Ecological Services in the Northeast Regional Office.

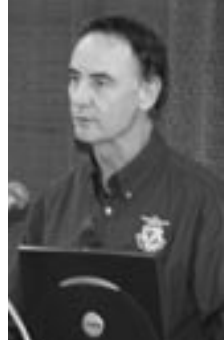
The agreement allows for removing two dams; decommissioning and constructing a fish bypass around a third dam; and providing the opportunity to increase hydropower generation at six existing dams and to improve fish passage at four more dams.

River restoration mapped out in the agreement will improve water quality and wildlife habitat; renew opportunities for sustenance fishing rights for the Penobscot Indian Nation; and create recreational and economic opportunities.

Laura Rose Day, project director for the Penobscot River Restoration Trust, said, "Gordon Russell played a vital role in bringing together diverse parties, resolving differences, and moving forward with the common goal of restoring the Penobscot River."

During the five-year process of developing the agreement, Thabault said, Russell represented the Service in negotiations with as many as 14 representatives from dam owner PPL Maine, the Penobscot Indian Nation, several conservation organizations, and state and federal agencies.

"Gordon has been a critical player on the Fisheries Committee, and he has been a very positive face for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service amongst project partners and in the local communities," said Andy Goode, executive director of the Atlantic Salmon Federation in Maine.



Gordon Russell

Russell is a 28-year Service employee with a bachelor's degree in zoology from the University of Connecticut at Storrs and a master's degree in fisheries from the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks. Russell has been the Maine Field Office project leader since 1990.

The John S. Gottschalk Partnership Award recognizes Service employees or teams who have developed and implemented natural resource partnerships. Gottschalk, a fisheries biologist, served as the Service's director from 1964 to 1970. He was a leader in promoting professionalism in fish and wildlife management.

Lowe among 50 Great Leaders for Oregon

Roy Lowe, project leader for the Oregon Coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex, was named one of 50 Great Leaders for Oregon in the October 2005 issue of Oregon Business magazine.

Lowe was selected as one of "10 For the Public Good"—leaders who are contributing to their communities to make Oregon a better place to live and do business. Lowe has been at the

Oregon Coast Complex for 20 years, where he manages three marine refuges and three estuarine refuges spread along 320 miles of coastline. Lowe has placed a strong emphasis on visitor services and outreach, partnering with the state to provide highway pull-outs and overlooks that provide wildlife viewing and interpretive opportunities.

Another key to his success has been the nurturing of local community involvement through volunteer programs and friends groups. A 28-year veteran with the Fish and Wildlife Service, Lowe also won a Conservation Leadership Award from the Nature Conservancy in 2002 and was selected Refuge Manager of the Year in 2005.

Justice Department Honors Service Special Agent

Special Agent **Sheila O'Connor**, who works for the Office of Law Enforcement in St. Paul, Minnesota, was recognized by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) for her successful investigation of the husband and wife owners of a now closed animal park and six of their business associates. The Racine, Minnesota, park, which promoted itself as an animal sanctuary, was the center of a criminal network engaged in the illegal interstate sale of endangered species.

O'Connor was among those honored for contributions to protecting the Nation's natural heritage at DOJ's 2005 Environment and Natural Resources Division Awards Ceremony, held in Washington, D.C., on September 16, 2005. O'Connor's investigation, which sent the park's owners to prison for terms of 18 and 15 months, exposed four years and more than \$200,000 worth of black market trafficking in such species as tigers, leopards, and grizzly bears.

In Memoriam

Service Employees Honored for Hurricane Relief Work

Thirteen Fish and Wildlife Service employees were among 125 workers from 14 Department of the Interior agencies honored in ceremonies January 25 for their rescue and recovery efforts following the Gulf Coast hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

"Today, we celebrate our heroes," said Interior Secretary Gale Norton, who said the aftermath of both hurricanes moved agency employees to go "well beyond the call of duty" as they worked to rescue people, deliver supplies and medicine, provide security and employ engineering skills.

Service employees honored included **Russ Watson**, **Paul Yakupsack** and **Mark Parr**, of Louisiana; **Tom Crews**, of North Carolina; **Glen Stratton** and **William D. Wolfe**, of Florida; **Rick Huffines**, **William Ferguson** and **Fred Wetzel**, of Georgia; **Paul Camp**, of Colorado; **Curtis Heaton**, of Arizona; **Richard Johnston**, of Texas and **LeaAnne Thorne** of Washington, D.C.

The Service contingent was introduced by narrator Ron Rull of the Secretary's Office of Communications, who said that Service employees "responded to hurricanes Katrina and Rita with a wide range of vital assistance to hard-hit refugees and local communities. They helped in the rescue and evacuation of several thousand city residents trapped by rising water."

Correction: The fish in the photo on page 24 of the Fall 2005 issue is a coho, or silver, salmon. It was incorrectly identified as a sockeye salmon.

Elaine Barnett, an employee at the Lake Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge, was killed December 6, 2005 in a vehicle accident on the refuge. Her fellow employees described Barnett as an "extremely capable, dedicated and caring maintenance professional" and said her loss has been felt deeply by her colleagues, family and the community.

Barnett was a native of Wilson's Mills, Maine, where she had been the postmaster for a number of years prior to joining the Service. She loved her family and the outdoors, and enjoyed photography, hiking, kayaking, boating, spending time at the Maine coast, fly-fishing and making maple syrup. She was married with two adult children and was a proud grandmother.

Her colleagues said Barnett "would not want us to stop and mourn, but to continue to put in a good day's work for nature, enjoy our families, and look out for each other and our neighbors in the communities we call home."

Office of Law Enforcement Special Agent **Tom Cloherty** died December 8 at Acadia National Park in Maine while on duty. His death was attributed to natural causes. During his 18-month career with the Service, Cloherty, age 37, worked throughout the Northeast Region from the Law Enforcement office in East Orland, Maine. He especially enjoyed a migratory bird enforcement detail in Alaska this past fall.

Cloherty graduated from the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glynco, Ga., and successfully completed a one-year field training program. He served as a lieutenant in the U.S. Coast Guard from 2000 to 2003. He graduated from Loyola

College in Maryland with a bachelor's degree in fine arts and philosophy in 1990 and from American Military University in 2003 with a master's degree in criminal justice. Cloherty grew up in South Salem, New York, and graduated from John Jay High School in 1986.

Cloherty leaves a wife and four children between 18 months and 8 years old. Although his time with the Service was short, Cloherty will be fondly remembered by his many friends and colleagues for his zest for life and infectious enthusiasm for conservation law enforcement. Memorial donations may be sent to the Thomas P. Cloherty Family Education Fund, C/O M & T Bank, 428 Evans Street, Williamsville, New York 14221.



Janna Brimmer, a fish and wildlife biologist at the Central Idaho Field Office in Salmon, Idaho, died unexpectedly from an aneurysm on January 9, 2006. Brimmer joined the Service in 2002, and was responsible for staffing a one-

person sub-office involved in many aquatic resource conservation and Partners for Fish and Wildlife issues. She is survived by her husband Arnie, her father, two sisters (Anna Iverson and Jerra Foster); and one nephew (Mitchell Foster). Memorial contributions may be made to the Janna Brimmer Memorial fund at any US Bank branch, account number 153352583212. All funds will be donated to the Salmon Chamber Pops Orchestra.

Parting Shots

Historic Moment. Acting Southwest Regional Director Dr. Benjamin Tuggle releases an immature bald eagle into the Bah Kho-je Xla Chi (Grey Snow Eagle House). On January 12, the Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma dedicated their eagle facility, located near Perkins in north central Oklahoma. The facility is unique as the only one with the dual purpose of housing eagles whose feathers will be used for traditional ceremonies as well as rehabilitating sick and injured eagles. The aviary and rehabilitation center was created using a 2004 Tribal Wildlife Grant of \$250,000. "I am personally touched to be part of this partnership between the Service and the Iowa Tribe in the conservation of the eagle," Tuggle said. "The eagle has been important to our first Americans, long before it became our national symbol." (USFWS/D.J. Monette)



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